

State to use \$5.8 million to track student progress

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — A \$5.8 million federal grant will allow Kentucky to modify its student testing system so that it can track progress over time.

The Commonwealth Accountability Testing System, or CATS, cannot currently track students over time in part because students are tested in different subjects each year and do not all receive the same form of exam.

Kentucky and 13 other states will be awarded a total of \$52.8 million over the next three years by the U.S. Department

of Education's Institute of Education Sciences.

Kentucky received the largest of the awards. The funding was based on the systems states had in place, what they hoped to accomplish in three years and the resources they had to meet their goals, said David Thomas, a spokesman at the Education Department.

State Sen. Dan Kelly, R-Springfield, said the tracking system will provide "teachers the type of feedback that they need so that they can know what's going

on with their students and make appropriate adjustments."

The grants coincide with a recent announcement that a handful of states can use a different method to determine whether students are meeting federal reading and math goals required by the federal No Child Left Behind law.

Up to 10 states will be allowed to measure how students' performance is changing over time in addition to their annual performance. The states haven't been announced, but Kentucky is among

those with a request to use the different method.

Lisa Gross, a spokeswoman for the state Education Department, said Kentucky expects to spend at least three years developing and implementing the tracking system. It will then need to collect several years' worth of data before it can judge how schools and students are performing, she said.

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